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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4233
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002693

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2017
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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA OUTLINES EXPECTATIONS FOR ERDOGAN AND
RICE VISITS

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkish MFA U/S Apakan summoned Ambassador late October 31 to relay on behalf of FM Babacan Turkey's expectations for the Secretary's bilateral visit here and PM Erdogan's upcoming meeting with the President. Apakan emphasized that the PKK problem has changed qualitatively and now requires new approaches. The government is continuing to pursue diplomacy, despite the public clamor for an incursion into Iraq, but there must be tangible results. PM Erdogan hopes to get from the US a clear plan of short- and medium-term measures our countries can take to end the PKK threat from northern Iraq and its presence there, measures reflecting a new US orientation to the matter that accords with our alliance. MFA Iraq Coordinator Celikkol said that Turkey regards the Istanbul Neighbors Ministerial as a completely separate event and does not want it derailed by the PKK problem, whatever attention to it may be paid by the Turkish press. These comments reflect opening salvos in what will be a series of tough, new messages on the PKK. They also reflect a Turkey that is still looking to diplomacy and to the US and recognizes results may take time. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Apakan began by complaining about remarks made October 30 by the White House spokesman regarding PM Erdogan's visit. Apakan advised that FM Babacan found the spokesman's wording "astonishing," especially the suggestion that the President will talk with Erdogan about exercising restraint, "limiting actions against the PKK," and continuing dialogue with the Iraqis. From Turkey's point of view, there is now a new situation with regard to the PKK. New kinds of actions are needed, not the old approaches that have failed over the past several years. The public expectation is that the government will undertake an incursion into Iraq. Despite this, the policy of the government is that it continues to seek through diplomacy and political means the achievement of tangible steps. We are at a critical time, and PM Erdogan's will be an historic visit.

¶3. (C) PM Erdogan will be looking to the President for concise and effective steps to eliminate the PKK presence in northern Iraq in a clear time frame through short- and medium-term actions that our countries can take. Moving decisively both to end PKK activities and to end its presence in northern Iraq is essential if this problem is not to continue unabated as a poison in Turkish-Iraqi and US-Turkish relations in the future. Merely reducing PKK activities or curbing its infiltration north across the border to attack Turkey will not do. In addition, there should be a change in the US approach toward Iraq and especially northern Iraq that takes Turkey's concerns into account in a manner that reflects the fact that we are allies. Turkey believes that actions by the US should indicate and reflect a strong Presidential direction to all elements of the USG to help Turkey on the PKK problem. Apakan said it will be a big

frustration if the US just proposes a meeting or puts forth proposals like those made by Iraq during last week's bilateral talks. Turkey hopes that Secretary Rice will listen afresh to Turkish concerns, report them to the President, and preview the kind of approach he will take with the prime minister.

¶4. (C) Regarding the Istanbul Neighbors Ministerial, Celikkol said that he was authorized to state that Turkey is doing and will continue to do all it can to support the Iraqi government through the ministerial process and otherwise. It expects the focus of the ministerial to be support for Iraq. It does not want the meeting to be hijacked by "bilateral issues," the PKK, etc. Turkey's own interventions will be designed toward this end, and Celikkol said he will be urging other delegations to behave similarly, including the Iraqis.

¶5. (C) Ambassador said that the US will be approaching the Ankara and Washington meetings in a constructive spirit of partnership and how we as partners can address what is obviously a serious problem. He expected the Secretary will do exactly what Apakan described -- listen, report and outline in general terms what the President will have to say to Erdogan on Monday. Ambassador said he could not get ahead of what the President and Secretary may say, but that Turkey's concerns are well understood, and Washington's policymakers appreciate the need for some different approaches to the PKK problem.

¶6. (C) Comment: The reference to a Presidential plan is both an appeal that we not provide piecemeal elements of aid to Turkey that do not fit into some coherent picture and for US leadership on the intractable PKK problem. We can expect more stern words, including from the inexperienced Babacan with Secretary Rice and from a prime minister in Washington who is under acute domestic pressure and is looking for a way

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WILSON